

Quick Guide to FAQs

What are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)?

A Frequently Asked Questions or FAQ is a document that provides answers to a list of typical questions that users might ask regarding a particular subject. In the case of UNHCR, FAQs users are mostly identified with refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced or stateless people who rely on the Organization to provide key information about their protection, rights and assistance.

Why are FAQs important?

FAQs use is key in many areas, such as strategic communications, change management, crisis communications, reputational management, and risk communications, for various reasons:

1. FAQs enable the Organization to deal with specific queries of affected populations about key protection risks and services, rights safeguards, or lifesaving assistance. They represent an effective way to reach out and [connect with target audience](#). Therefore, it is one of the most [important elements of a communication strategy](#).
2. Integrating an FAQ approach in strategic messaging is crucial [to predict and anticipate most of the affected populations key asks and concerns](#), hence [tailoring messages](#) to the concrete needs of the specific audience and making communications efforts more effective, which in turn contributes to build positive relationships and [trust](#).
3. Making FAQs widely and consistently available to affected populations [reduces the workload](#) of in-person processing of queries so that Protection staff may better focus their efforts.
4. In digital engagement, FAQ is an important component of websites, either as a stand-alone page or as a website section with multiple subpages per question or topic. Embedding links to FAQ pages have become commonplace in website navigation and design. Good FAQs represent high quality content that can improve ranking performance, [increase](#) the [visibility](#) of the [website](#) by matching/optimizing for specific search terms linking to or integrating within product pages, hence [increasing](#) levels of [relevant traffic](#) on your web page. It is also a great way to [improve user journey](#), optimizing the user experience by addressing his/her needs, again contributing to [build trust](#).

How to use Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQ is often used in websites, email lists, articles, and online forums where common questions recur. In Communication, it is key that the main issues and concerns affecting communities are collected through research, demographics, patterns, media analysis, reviews of historical feedback, interviews and focus groups discussions with frontline community-protection staff. These findings should be structured in a systematic manner by preparing and regularly updating FAQs for periodic testing of messages with the affected communities. The following FAQs uses are hence recommended to UNHCR Operations:

Strategic Communication messaging: Integrating an FAQ approach in strategic messaging can help operations understand the key questions or concerns of affected populations hence tailoring communication efforts to their needs. Before drafting key messages, ask yourself if this is really what affected populations want to or need to hear and draft messages that anticipate and address key asks.

Internally: As good practice, FAQs around main topics of interest to affected populations (i.e. registration process, refugees' rights and obligations, assistance, etc..) should be prepared, updated regularly and shared internally among frontline community-protection and field staff.

Offline and face-to-face communications: FAQs may be shared externally with key field partners or community volunteers/leaders during meetings, focus groups and regular discussions in the form of briefs or printed materials, such as leaflets or one-pagers for further distribution among the communities or strategically placed in community centers. Such meetings provide key opportunities to integrate feedback to regularly update the FAQs.

Digital engagement:

- **FAQ page** helps to respond to the audience needs more quickly and appropriately. UNHCR operations are increasingly building presence on [Help.org](#). The objective of the platform is to ensure that affected people have relevant and helpful content dedicated to them while supporting UNHCR workforce in reducing caseload by providing a certain level of protection information online, notably through FAQs. Currently in the MENA region, the site serves nine operations, while many others are in the process to join it. If your operation is about to launch a country Help page, drafting comprehensive FAQs is the first step toward this goal. If already on Help.org, it is an essential page that should be kept up to date. The correct format for FAQ digital upload is **plain text** that may be accompanied by **video** and **audio files**. PDF format should be avoided because it is difficult to access, especially from a phone. Some examples of how to make **inclusive** and **accessible** FAQ pages on Help.org are provided [here](#).
- **FAQ chatbot**. A chatbot is a text or voice-based program that provides quick services/information by simulating a person-to-person conversation. Many operations use chatbots to provide support by publishing FAQ sections to answer frequent or important questions via Turn.io or WhatsApp.

How to write effective answers to FAQs

- When writing answers to FAQs, you should ensure they are **concise**, **insightful**, and **link** back to the **services** that you are providing. Beware that mentioning unavailable services or inactive telephone numbers may on the contrary frustrate your audience, damaging trust.
- Online behaviour, particularly when in distress, requires **quick, to the point, and easy answers**. Long wordy answers should be avoided. The easier the information is to digest, the better.
- Organising FAQs into **themes** (registration, rights and obligations etc..) is a great way to assist the user through all aspects of the areas they are questioning and make them more effective.
- Finally, look to leverage your FAQ content with **long-tail keywords** that users are searching for, for example 'refugee assistance', 'camp food distribution' etc... This will not only improve the quality of your content but also boost your search engine optimisation efforts.
- Consider **accessibility** features for people with disabilities or difficulties, as well as the **language** that is **more relatable** and **inclusive** for people with different education levels, minority groups, women and people with diverse needs and characteristics. For example, UNHCR Help.org platform offers **text-to-speech options** to convert content into audio files that are more accessible to people with lower literacy levels or visual difficulties. Be mindful of it while drafting so the language is clear and simple when recorded. You can test your language sound by using the read-aloud feature on MS Word (Review>Read Aloud).